



Lesson title	Healing body and soul
Learning objective	Pupils will find out about the importance of plants to our well being and how some plants have medicinal properties.
Pupils will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explore how beautiful surroundings and plants can evoke a feeling of well being ■ Find out about the symbolism of flowers in particular in the Christian, Hindu and Islam religions ■ Create a symbolic posy . ■ Discover how many modern day medicines contain synthetic chemicals that have been copied from chemicals originally found in plants.
Key words	National Trust, good health and wellbeing, healing gardens, symbolic plants, decongestants.

Plan	Resources
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Read together the poem 'Leisure' by W H Davies (Resource 1). Ask the children what makes them happy when they are outdoors.</p>	<p>Resource 1: The poem 'Leisure' by W H Davies</p>
<p>Activity 1</p> <p>Octavia Hill was a Victorian social reformer who believed that urban workers who lived in cities should have access to beautiful countryside and gardens to promote good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>She was one of the founders of the National Trust, an organisation which since 1885 has acquired many houses, gardens and land for the nation to enjoy. Show a selection of National Trust properties - houses, coast and countryside (Resource 2). Share ideas of what kind of things the children might enjoy doing in these spaces e.g. flying a kite, playing hide and seek or enjoying a peaceful view. Group their responses into the categories of physical (doing something) and emotional (feeling something).</p> <p>Ask the children to think of their own favourite place to visit during weekends or holidays. What do they like doing while they are there? Add these activities to the</p>	<p>Resource 2: Images of National Trust properties</p>



Plan	Resources
<p>physical or emotional categories list. Are the class nominations places which evoke a more physical, or a more emotional response or do they evoke a mix?</p>	
<p>Activity 2 Ask the children if they have ever read anything by Michael Morpurgo e.g. <i>War Horse</i>.</p> <p>Michael and his wife love the outdoors and set up a charity called Farms for City Children (see Resources).</p> <p>Ask the children why do they think city children might need farms. A possible answer might be that they may not have access to green spaces at home. The children staying on the farms can experience the connection between what they eat and where it comes from.</p> <p>What might the city children do on a farm stay? A possible answer might be – dig potatoes and milk cows.</p> <p>Gardens are also great places for healing body and soul. Hospitals, hospices and nursing homes often have gardens where the patients can enjoy green and tranquil surroundings. There is evidence that patients in hospital recover more quickly if they can see a window with trees or green space outside.</p> <p>Some gardens can also provide therapeutic space for people to learn new skills, gain confidence and feel better physically and emotionally who may not have access to green spaces in their daily lives. Humanists believe we can give meaning and happiness to our lives by helping others and thinking responsibly about the environment and the people around us.</p> <p>Show photographs of healing gardens (Resource 3). Ask the children what helps them feel better when they are ill.</p>	<p>Michael Morpurgo is a well known children’s author whose books include: <i>War Horse</i>, <i>Mudpuddle Farm</i> and <i>This Morning I met a Whale</i>.</p> <p>See http://michaelmorpurgo.com/books</p> <p><i>Farms for City Children</i> was founded in 1976 by Michael Morpurgo and his wife with the aim of giving children from towns and cities the chance to learn firsthand where their food comes from, how to care for and look after animals and land, and how to work co-operatively as a team.</p> <p>See http://www.farmsforcitychildren.co.uk/index.htm</p> <p>Resource 3: Images of healing gardens</p>



Plan

Activity 3

Plants can help people to share their memories and thoughts. Show the children pictures of holly, red roses and tulsi/Holy basil (**Resource 4**). What (if anything) comes to mind when they see these?

These plants have special meanings for customs and religions:

- Holly may represent Christmas for Christians;
- Red roses may represent love especially on Valentine's day;
- In Islam the rose is the Prophet Muhammed's favourite flower;
- Tulsi or Holy basil is a sacred plant for Hindus as it symbolises harmony, happiness and good health and is often grown in pots in front of or near the home.

In Victorian times flowers had symbolic meanings, for instance giving someone a posy of forget-me-nots before travelling would remind them of their true love. The class is going to create a posy of flowers to give to someone who is recovering from an illness.

Ask the children to have a look at the symbolic meaning of different flowers (**Resource 5**) and choose some to put into their posy. They may like to make their choices based on how beautiful they are, how they smell, but also what they symbolise. Which have they chosen and why?

The class could draw their flowers, find pictures to cut out to make a collage or perhaps make a 3D posy with pipe cleaners and tissue paper. The flowers could then be labelled with their meaning (**see Resources**).

Resources

Resource 4: Images of flowers and plants with meaning

Resource 5: The symbolic meaning of flowers

see: **HealBodyRes2flowers.pdf**

List taken from: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_of_flowers*

Materials required: Cardboard, paper, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, pencils, coloured pencils, paint, paint brushes, glue



Plan

Activity 4

Some plants are thought to have healing powers e.g. eucalyptus leaves produce an oil which has antiseptic properties and is also used as a decongestant to unblock stuffy noses.

In the past knowledge of plant remedies were either passed down from one generation to another, or people visited a healer or pharmacist often associated with their religion to make them better. In medieval times Christian monks and nuns ran hospitals from their monasteries and grew many of the healing plants in the gardens. Being an as-saydanani (pharmacist) was recognised as a profession in Islamic countries as far back as the eighth century.

Today plant based remedies are popular in herbal medicines and many modern day medicines have synthetic chemicals in them which have been copied from those found in plants, e.g. the decongestant and asthma treatment pseudoephedrine is a version of ephedrine which came from plants.

Ask the children to look at the list of healing plants (**Resource 6**) and choose one: Gingko, dog rose, evening primrose, Echinacea and ransoms (wild garlic). Ask the children to make a container for their healing plant either by re-using a jar, bottle or tin, or fold card to make a box or packet (**Resources**). Use the container and add a label to display information about the plant and its healing properties. Include a drawing or find an image of the plant to pop into the container.

Make a display of the class's healing plants container collection.

Resources

Resource 6: Healing plants (pdf)

see: **HealBodyRes2medicinalplants.pdf**

Taken from: <http://www.pfaf.org>

Materials required: Containers (jar, bottle or tin) card, paper, coloured pencils or crayons, glue, sellotape

Healing body and soul



Lesson Plan

Plan

Plenary

Bring in a mint plant, some lemons and sugar (**Resources**). Pick some mint leaves and let them steep in hot water make a pot of fresh mint tea. Alternatively squeeze some lemon into a pot of hot water and add sugar to taste.

Sitting down to drink tea is a good way to share stories, laughter, worries and problems in a relaxed setting.

Share the tea among the class and discuss with them what they have learned doing these activities and, in particular, how they think plants can change the way we feel.

Resources

Materials required: Mint, lemon, sugar, cups, hot water